

History James M. M. M.

DRAWER 100

71.2001.DES.03&75



Abraham Lincoln's Contemporaries

James Whitcomb Riley

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

189

JNO. C. NEW, President
HARRY S. NEW, Secretary.GEORGE C. HITT,
General Agent

BUSINESS DEPARTMENT.

THE INDIANAPOLIS JOURNAL.

The Indianapolis Journal Newspaper Company, Publishers.

Indianapolis, Ind., Oct. 18th 1890.

Jesse H. New, Esq. —

Dear Sir:

You must take a special word of thanks and congratulations from us in regard to the newness and refreshing value of your talk on the great Lincoln — the most perfect American type, doubtless, in History. Your clear, dispassionate treatment and noble summary and estimate of the high character of the man, at once loved and revered of all nations, seemed to us, ^{expressive} of common sense taste and wisdom on your part, having been so intimately associated in life with a personage of such lofty genius and yet so simply lovable. Let me express the wish that you will go on before the public with this work which seems so solely your own endowment.

Again with thanks Your friend,

James Whitcomb Riley.

\$1,000 LINCOLN MANUSCRIPT

Compiled by HERBERT WELLS FAY, Custodian Lincoln's Tomb

Lincoln's fame was not confined to Lincoln. It is shared by those associated with him, including the authors he read and as well as the authors who rave about him. Everything Lincoln touched has a sacred touch, and at his tomb admiring friends lift their hats as they would in the presence of things most sacred. James Whitcomb Riley touched hearts by his muse. Long before his death the admirers of his genius organized in groups to perpetuate his memory.

It was ages before some of the European poets came to their own, but even before his death Riley lines were on the lips of about every Hoosier school boy.

Collectors are bidding \$1,000 for some of his prized poetical manuscripts. In time his Lincoln will be considered a priceless treasure. There are one hundred Lincoln collectors starting every year, no one can foretell what the future demand will be.

Years ago a stranger appeared at the ticket office window in a little village in southern Indiana and called for a telegraph blank. It was one of those stations that is a one-man affair. The agent acted as operator, sells tickets, checks baggage, handles the mail and takes charge of the express and freight. On the blank addressed to a banker in Indianapolis, the stranger wrote: "Please telegraph me ten dollars," signed "James Whitcomb Riley."

The agent said "can you prove to me that you are Riley?" and he produced papers, recited poems and made identification positive. The operator took out his personal pocketbook and handed the poet a ten dollar bill asking him to sign a receipt for the same. Years after he showed the Riley treasures to a friend of the writer and said that he had been offered \$100 for the two Riley signatures and release of the story.

A few months ago the papers carried the story of the manuscript of a well known Riley poem had sold for \$1,000. I have a collection of the Hoosier poet that

will make a display a foot high and sixty feet long. It consists of most of the portraits of the poet, pictures of his three homes, engrossed copies of his poems, an autographed photograph and last and by best the original manuscript of poem on Lincoln that he sent me about the time it was written. This Riley manuscript and collection attracts a lot of attention.





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2013

<http://archive.org/details/abrahamlincolnscjwrlinc>

